Working Connections Child Care Policy Manual

A Guide to Understanding WAC 170-290



Introduction

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program helps eligible families pay for child care while participating in approved activities. Families choose the child care that works best for them.

This manual is intended to provide guidance for common situations that arise in applying the administrative rules, the WAC.

Timely communication and consistent follow-through with the consumer and provider, is key to quality service delivery. Child care staff may need to offer extra help to consumers to help them understand the reporting requirements and documentation necessary to determine eligibility.

If fraud is suspected, a referral to the Office of Financial Accountability (OFA) must be made for an investigation.

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) explains the rules for WCCC.

Additional Resources

- Department of Early Learning (DEL)
- <u>Child Care Check</u>, Washington's licensed child care information system
- Subsidy information for child care providers
- Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system
- Child Care Aware of Washington
- <u>Collective Bargaining Agreement</u> for licensed family home and family, friends and neighbor (FFN) child care providers

Self-Employment Resources

- <u>Doing Business in Washington State</u>
- Register a Washington business
- Washington Small Business Guide
- Starting a business in Washington

Introduction

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Purpose and Intent WAC 170-290-0001	
Scope of Agency Responsibilities WAC 170-290-0002	
Definitions <u>WAC 170-290-0003</u>	WCCC Family is based on how the child is related to the subsidy benefit applicant Joint Custody means a child's time is divided between two parents. In these cases, parents must apply separately for the subsidy benefit for their particular household. Live-in partner or partner. The consumer and the partner must meet the requirements, whether or not they are "state registered domestic partners" as defined in RCW 26.60.

Eligibility

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Consumers WAC 170-290-0005	Non-Parental Custody of a Child. Non-parental custody can be shown by court documents signed by a judge, or be an informal written agreement between two parties. Staff may approve eligibility based on the consumer's statement of circumstances pending final verification. • Permanent Custody. (Also known as "legal guardianship", "3rd party custody" or "dependency guardianship.") Permanent custody is shown by a final custody order, signed by a judge. • Temporary or Emergency Custody are legal documents, signed by a judge. • Informal Written Agreements are signed and dated by parent and the caregiver assuming custodial responsibility for the child. WCCC and Children's Administration (CA). WCCC and CA Child Care are two different programs and families may be eligible for both at the same time, depending on the family's specific circumstances, eligibility and activities. When both WCCC and CA child care is authorized for the same family, the WCCC child care hours must not be same as the CA child care hours. Children's Protective Services (CPS) and Child Welfare Services (CWS) social staff authorize child care as part of the case plan for families' receiving services through CPS or CWS for employed foster parents. AmeriCorps/Vista Child Care Subsidy. The person applying for WCCC is not eligible for child care benefits from WCCC if child care is already subsidized by AmeriCorps or Vista child care programs.

Verifying Consumers' Information WAC 170-290-0012

Existing Employment

The consumer chooses one of three options for verification:

- 1. Copies of the most current three months of paystubs; or
- 2. Employer statement by phone or in writing of paid gross wages and typical schedule for the most current three months of employment; or
- 3. W-2 with tax return for the calendar year immediately preceding date of application for benefits.

New or Changed Employment

The consumer must provide:

- 1. Employer statement of anticipated gross wages and expected work schedule for the next month pending verification with actual paystub(s) and schedule within 30 days of approved application; or
- 2. If the employer does not respond, the consumer's written statement of anticipated gross wages and expected work schedule. Staff is to request verification of actual paystub(s) <u>and</u> work schedule to be returned within 30 days.

Applicant Name

A consumer's name must match the name on their income verification documents. Staff will ask for additional information if questionable.

Residential Time or Shared Custody of a Child

The following verification may be used:

- 1. Court documentation, such as dissolution parenting plans.
- 2. If court documentation is not available or current, use informal records between **parents** or collateral contacts.

Child Support Paid by the Non-Custodial Parent

Verify the child support paid out by:

- 1. SEMS verification; or
- 2. Current court order showing the child support amount, receipts or copy of canceled checks from the paying parent or;
- 3. A pay stub from the paying parent showing the child support deducted.

Child Support Received by the Custodial Parent

Verify the child support amount received using:

- 1. SEMS verification or
- 2. Current court order showing the child support amount or
- 3. An informal written and signed statement between the parents in lieu of court order. If a signed statement cannot be obtained, a verbal statement from the consumer can be used. Document why they could not get a written statement.

Uniform Business Identifier (UBI) of Self-Employed

Verify a consumer's business registration and UBI number on-line at:

http://dor.wa.gov/content/doingbusiness/registermybusiness/

Eligibility-Family Size	In Loco Parentis
WAC 170-290-0015	Apply WAC 170-290-0015(1)(f) to all in loco parentis consumers.
	Domestic Partnerships Law
	Same sex partners registered under <u>RCW 26.60</u> domestic partnership law are
	considered two-parent households. Family size is determined as described in <u>170-290-</u>
	0015(1)(d).
	Live-In Partner
	Apply either 170-290-0015(1)(b) or 170-290-0015 (1)(c) when determining family size. Military Leave
	When a parent who is out of the home on active military duty returns home for a
	period of 30 days or less, the family is still eligible for child care benefits. Family size,
	eligibility and copayment are not re-determined during this time period.
	Minor Parents with Legal Custody of their Children
	The minor parent is considered a separate family, even if they live with the minor's
	parent, guardian or other relative. The minor parent's parent, guardian or relative is not
	considered when determining family size.
	Minor Parents without Legal Custody of their Children
	When the minor parent lives with the legal guardian of his or her children, the minor parent is not considered the consumer. The minor parent is not counted in determining
	family size for income eligibility and the minor parent's ability or availability to provide
	child care is not to be considered. WAC 170-290-0015(1)(f) applies.
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Eligibility-Special Circumstances	Employer-Provided Child Care Benefits A consumer, who receives shild care at no cost as a honefit of his or her employment, is
WAC 170-290-0020	A consumer, who receives child care at no cost as a benefit of his or her employment, is not eligible for WCCC benefits.
	Court-Ordered Substance Abuse or Mental Health Treatment.
	When a parent in a two-parent family is court-ordered to attend substance abuse or
	mental health treatment, that parent is not considered able or available to care for the
	children during treatment participation.
	Consumer Residence and FFN Providers
	The consumer can live with the FFN provider who cares for their child as long as the
	approved activities are outside the provider's home.
	Child's Visitation
	If a consumer currently receives WCCC for children residing in the household and
	another child joins the household for visitation and needs child care, that child is
	authorized under the consumer's current benefits with no changes to the consumer's
	family size, income or copayment.

Rights and Responsibilities

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Consumer Rights WAC 170-290-0025	Provider Overpayments or Underpayments If a child care provider incorrectly bills the state for child care services causing an overpayment or underpayment, consumers may not be held accountable for the provider's billing errors to the state.
Consumers' Responsibilities WAC 170-290-0030	

Notification of Changes WAC 170-290-0031	Due Date If the due date for reporting changes falls on a non-business day, consumers have until the next business day to turn in required information.
Failure to Report Changes WAC 170-290-0032	
Providers' Responsibilities WAC 170-290-0034	
DSHS'S Responsibilities to Consumers WAC 170-290-0035	Providers in States Bordering Washington Providers are required to be in compliance with the licensing requirements of their State. Staff may obtain a verbal confirmation from the providers regarding their compliance.

Approved Activities

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Approved Activities for TANF Consumers WAC 170-290-0040	In-Sanction and Working Sanction is a penalty that reduces a WorkFirst consumer's cash assistance. It is imposed when a person is able to, but refuses without good cause to participate in their Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) requirements. A consumer who is in WorkFirst sanction may be eligible for WCCC benefits for employment or other approved activities during his or her sanction period. Approved Activities. WorkFirst consumers found eligible for WCCC may have child care subsidy benefits approved for activities that are specified in the consumer's current IRP, including intensive services activities (known as x-components) in the IRP. Training and education activities. TANF/WorkFirst consumers of WCCC are not subject to the limitations described for non-TANF applicants and consumers of WCCC in 170-290-0045. Authorizing Care After reviewing the parents and children's schedules, authorize: 1. 23 full day units for licensed, 230 hours for FFN when the IRP approved activities total 32 hours or more per week. 2. Use a standard Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm schedule, unless specified in the IRP or reported differently by the consumer. Tribal TANF, WCCC and Dual Eligibility Some Tribes in WA manage their own TANF and WorkFirst program. Tribal members may receive subsidies from the Tribe or DSHS. This is called dual eligibility. A WorkFirst Tribal member's participation requirements may be different than non-Tribal participants. If a Tribal member requests WCCC from DSHS, use WAC rules regarding family size, counting income and determining copayments. Tribal TANF activities are approvable activities for WCCC.

Approved Activities for Consumers not Receiving TANF WAC 170-290-0045

Subsidized Employment.

Subsidized employment can include:

- 1. Working in a federal or state paid work study program; or
- VISTA volunteers, AmeriCorps, Job Corps and Washington Service Corps (WSC) if the income is taxed.

Employment

Paid work study, internships and practicums count as employment.

In-Kind Activities

Unless consumer receives taxable and reported compensation for in-kind activity, this does not count as approved work activity.

Volunteer Activities

Non-TANF consumers of WCCC may not receive child care benefits for volunteer or community services activities

Vocational Education

- 1.Two-year degrees with a vocational education focus are permitted.
- 2. The accredited college or school defines prerequisites for their enrolled students.
- 3. Consumers can combine work study and other employment hours to meet the minimum number of work hours required for education and training activities.

Working under the Table.

If the activity meets the definition of employment or work, as described in WAC <u>170-290-0003</u>, then the activity is considered to be an approvable activity. We do not monitor if the activity has been or will be reported to the IRS nor taxes paid.

Additional Requirements for Self-Employed Consumers WAC 170-290-0050

Resources for Self-Employment

Direct applicants or consumers to the following resources for assistance:

Washington State Department of Revenue

http://dor.wa.gov/content/doingbusiness/registermybusiness/

Small Business Assistance

http://www.ora.wa.gov/business.asp

http://access.wa.gov/business/start.aspx

Incorporations

Incorporated businesses are not self-employment enterprises.

- Compensation received by an individual from a corporation is countable income.
- Any distribution of income, including compensation benefits such as rent, living expenses, or transportation is countable income for consumers reporting employment and income as or under an incorporated business.

Cost of Doing Business. Self-employed consumers are responsible for the costs involved in providing verification of his or her business license, registration, UBI number or other self-employment documents needed to determine eligibility for benefits.

Receipt of Benefits When not	Fourteen-Day wait period
Engaged in Approved Activities	The wait period can be used multiple times per calendar year. The wait period cannot
WAC 170-290-0055	be used back to back. Its intended use is for, but not limited to:
<u></u>	When the start date of new employment is within 14 days of the request.
	 During school breaks, when the end of one school period is within 14 days of the new school period.
	When on the job training is required prior to the start date of the actual job.
	Consumer GAP Benefits
	Receiving GAP does not qualify as an approved activity.
	28-day GAP Back-to-Back Usage
	A consumer may use the two 28-day GAP coverage periods back-to-back within the
	current authorization period.
	Medical Leave
	The 28-day gap period and the 14-day wait period may not be used to cover pregnancy,
	post-partum recovery, hospitalizations or other extended medical leave situations.
	For medical leave coverage for a single- parent family, them to CA.
	 If two-parent family needs child care coverage during the time one parent is
	not able or available due to extended medical leave, apply 170-290-0020(3).

Income and Copayment Calculations

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Countable Income WAC 170-290-0060	Irregular Pay Check If a consumer receives a bonus or an irregular paycheck that is expected to occur only once in the calendar year, it is treated as a lump sum. Children's SSI When a child receives SSI income, the following conditions must apply for the income to be used in determining the family's eligibility: 1. The child must reside with the representative payee that administers the monthly disability SSI benefits. 2. Do not count any past-due SSI lump-sum payments in the WCCC household income. Working under the Table. If the activity meets the definition of employment or work, as described in WAC 170-290-0003, the income would be considered countable income for the household. We do not monitor if the income has been or will be reported to the IRS nor taxes paid.
Calculation of Income WAC 170-290-0065	
Excluded Income and Deductions WAC 170-290-0070	Excluded Income Do not count income from: 1. A third-party child care copayment made directly to the provider. 2. SSI overpayments that are withheld from gross SSI income. 3. Earned income of siblings enrolled in high school or GED completion, or of siblings participating in a public special education program, until age 22.

Determining Income Eligibility and Copayment Amounts WAC 170-290-0075	Copayment Amounts A copayment amount never exceeds the actual cost of care at the state rate or the provider's rate, whichever rate is less. A consumer's copayment must meet this requirement during the entire authorization period. Splitting Copayments Between Multiple Providers A consumer may request the copayment to be split among providers. The consumer may choose which provider to assign the copayment.
Eligibility Period WAC 170-290-0082	
Change in Copayment WAC 170-290-0085	
Minimum Copayment WAC 170-290-0090	Eligibility for Minimum Copayment Determine first, if the regular, ongoing copayment is less than the total cost of care for all children in the family that will receive WCCC. If yes, then apply the minimum copayment rule.

Start Dates and Eligibility Period

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
When Benefits Start for Consumers WAC 170-290-0095	
Denial of Benefits-Date of Redetermining Eligibility WAC 170-290-0107	
New Eligibility Period WAC 170-290-0109	If the reapplication is more than 30 days old when the requested information is received, a new application should be requested. However, the date the requested information was received is the first date of eligibility.
Termination of and Redetermining Eligibility for Benefits WAC 170-290-0110	

Notice

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Notice of Payment Changes WAC 170-290-0115	Referred-Back Referred back is a notice that is sent to the Work First Program Specialist when a WorkFirst consumer does not participate in their IRP requirements. If a WorkFirst consumer is referred back for non-participation, the child care worker must provide the parent and the provider with a 10-day advance and adequate notice of termination.
When Notice of Payment Changes is not Required WAC 170-290-0120	

Eligible Child Care Providers

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Eligible Child Care Providers WAC 170-290-0125	No Referral There is a No Referral process. However, this process is currently under review. Status 4 Status 4 is on the provider file. It is an indication that a serious, reported concern has been made on the ability, character or background of the provider. Providers with a Status 4 are not eligible to receive child care subsidy payments. Notice of Status 4 may be sent to the child care worker from the DEL licensor or the SSPS staff who have taken action on the provider's status. Out-of-State Providers If the provider has not had a criminal history background check through their own state, a background check must be processed through Washington State and the BCCU. School Age Child Care Federal rules strictly forbid child care subsidy dollars being used to pay for education costs, such as tuition, for children in grades 1-12. This includes families that home school. Center Exception If the center provider cares for a child who is thirteen or older, the provider must have a child-specific and time-limited exception and the child must meet the special needs
FFN Providers-Eligibility WAC 170-290-0130	requirement according to WAC <u>170-290-0220</u> . Employment FFN providers are considered to be employees of the WCCC consumers. Consumer Residence and In-Home or Relative Child Care Providers The consumer can live with the FFN provider who cares for the consumer's child as long as the approved activities are outside the provider's home.

FFN Providers-Information Provided to DSHS WAC 170-290-0135	Individuals with a documented disability must provide verification that they can perform the following requirements of caring for a child: 1. Pick up or hold a child. 2. Use a phone to call in an emergency. 3. Identify emergency situations. 4. Have a valid driver's license if transporting the child. 5. Stay alert and responsive while caring for the child. 6. Provide age and developmentally appropriate guidance and activities for the child.
FFN Providers-Responsibilities WAC 170-290-0138	
FFN Electronic Attendance Records-Records Retention WAC 170-290-0139	
FFN Providers-Ineligibility WAC 170-290-0140	The provider is not eligible for any child care subsidy payments before the date DSHS receives background check results. The "received date" is the date DSHS receives the information from the Washington State Patrol.
FFN Providers-Background Checks-Required Persons <u>WAC 170-290-0143</u>	Non-Conviction Information The provider's non-conviction information cannot be disclosed to the consumer unless the provider has signed a release of information. Frequency of Background Checks 1. The approved background check is good for 90 days from the date of approval for families that may request the provider. 2. A provider is not required to have a new background check when the family has a break of less than 30 days in child care with the approved provider.
FFN Providers-Background Checks- Reasons and Notification WAC 170-290-0145	
FFN Providers-Background Checks- Included Information and Sources WAC 170-290-0150	
FFN Providers-Background Checks- Subsequent Steps WAC 170-290-0155	
FFN Providers-Background Checks-Disqualified Providers WAC 170-290-0160	
FFN Providers-Background Checks- Other Disqualifying Information WAC 170-290-0165	
FFN Providers-Background Checks- Disqualified Person Living with the Provider WAC 170-290-0167	

Subsidy Rates and Fees

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
WCCC Subsidy Rates-Effective Dates WAC 170-290-0180	Provider's Customary Rate 1. If a provider offers sliding fee scale rates or offers free child care as part of a benefits package, the state must compare the maximum state rate and the rate charged to the family. The lesser of the two rates will be paid. 2. If a consumer receives child care at no cost as a benefit of their employment, the consumer is not eligible for WCCC benefits. Age Changes When a child's age changes to the next age group, the effective date of the rate change is the first day of the following month. Provider Rate Changes Providers report their rates to DSHS by phone, on-line, or on the WCCC application with DSHS annually by September 1 each year. Providers must also update rate changes as they occur throughout the rest of the year.
WCCC Subsidy Rates-Five Year Old Children <u>WAC 179-290-0185</u>	
WCCC Authorized and Additional Payments-Determining Units of Care WAC 170-290-0190	Establish a typical or average number of weekly hours for the consumer's work or approved activities, and multiply by 4.3 to get the monthly total hours. School-Age Child Care When the Consumer's Approved Activities are Less Than 110 Hours Per Month 1. When five days of school-age child care is needed weekly during the school year, authorize 30 half-day units (HDUs) per month. 2. When fewer than five days of school-age child care is needed weekly during the school year, authorize the HDUs needed. Add five additional half-day units to cover early release and school closure days.
Daily Child Care Rates-Licensed or Certified Child Care Centers and DEL Contracted Seasonal Day Camps WAC 170-290-0200	
Daily Child Care Rates-Licensed or Certified Family Home Child Care Providers WAC 170-290-0205	 The provider may not bill for WCCC subsidies if the provider also receive TANF on behalf of the child as an in-loco parentis or a non-needy relative caregiver. If the consumer is employed by the licensed family home, WCCC will not pay for the consumer's child during those hours the consumer is working in the licensed family home.
Tiered Reimbursement WAC 170-290-0210	
Special Needs Rates- Qualifications <u>WAC 170-290-0220</u>	

Special Needs Rates-Child Care Centers and Seasonal Day Camps WAC 170-290-0225 Special Needs Rates- Family Home Child Care Providers WAC 170-290-0230 Special Needs Rates-FFN Providers WAC 170-290-0235	
Child Care Subsidy Rates-FFN Providers WAC 170-290-0240	FFN rates If a consumer is using more than one FFN provider, each provider is eligible for the maximum FFN rate for one child.
Registration Fees WAC 170-290-0245	
Field Trip Fees WAC 170-290-0247	 1. The field trip/enhancement fee covers special activities, such as: Admission costs to places such as zoo, museum, movies, swimming pools Enrichment programs and ongoing lessons such as language classes, gymnastics, swimming lessons Public transportation or mileage reimbursement at the OFM Rate Cost of hiring a non-employee such as clowns, pony rides, music performances The purchase of a pre-kindergarten curriculum Provider developed and DEL approved curriculum The field trip/enhancement fee does not cover: Fees or admission costs for adults on the field trip Supplies or Equipment needed to meet licensing requirements Food purchased on field trips
Nonstandard Hour Bonus <u>WAC 170-290-0249</u>	
Eligible Provider Capacity WAC 170-290-0250	Capacity Limits and Termination of Payments Terminate payment for subsidized care that places the provider over the maximum capacity limits. Overpayments for Violating Capacity Limits Issue an overpayment notice only for the children that place the provider over the capacity limit.

Payment Discrepancies

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Generally <u>WAC 170-290-0266</u>	Overpayment Disputes. Overpayment disputes resulting from Payment Review Program, (PRP) are handled by PRP.
Provider Underpayments WAC 170-290-0267	
Provider Overpayments WAC 170-290-0268	
Consumer Underpayments WAC 170-290-0269	
Consumer Overpayments WAC 170-290-0271	Determining Consumer Income When Calculating an Overpayment WAC 170-290-0065 allows staff to choose the method in calculating income. When an overpayment is processed, Office of Fraud and Accountability (OFA) should use the same method as chosen and documented by the worker.
Providers Covered Under CBA WAC 170-290-0275	

Administrative Hearings

WAC Name/Number	Policy Guidance
Right to Request an Administrative Hearing WAC 170-290-0280	Verbal Request A verbal request for an administrative hearing may be accepted by any DSHS employee.
Receipt of WCCC Benefits Pending the Outcome of an Administrative Hearing WAC 170-290-0285	Eligibility for Benefits The consumer is eligible for WCCC benefits through the end of the current certification period providing WAC 170-290-0285 (1)(a) or (b) is met.